

The Fire Fighter Gazette

Issue 26

October 2002

Getting a Seat at the Table...

Editor's Note: Reprinted with permission from Mr. Warner, Chief, Air Force Fire Protection

"...we don't play second fiddle to any other shop. Period."

As I discussed in most of the individual workshops that I was privileged to address, we need to always be at the table to represent fire protection issues. Fire Protection is 16.2 percent of CE and is the largest single AFSC by almost twice. As of June 1, 2002, there were 41,881 civil engineers of which 6,757 were 3E7XX. The next largest group is 3,918 in HVAC. These numbers include all Part-A (full-time) personnel.

There are only 1374 CE officers.

Why is it that fire fighters often refer to themselves as being "under" CE? By sheer numbers, our people should consider themselves CE or a part of CE, but certainly not "under" CE or any other organization. We are an integral part of CE. When combined with the Readiness and EOD flights,

certainly "emergency services" type functions dominate the entire CE organization. CE is more than plumbers and electricians. CE keeps the base running as well as providing the

services, such as fire protection, to protect all of it. So, we don't play second fiddle to any other shop. Period.

Traditionally, fire departments have not been as involved with other CEers as they should be. In some cases, fire fighters don't even know what the rest of CE does. Conversely, other CEers don't know what fire fighters do. One of the reasons is that the fire department is located remotely from the rest of CE, which makes communications challenging. On the other hand, we create some of our own problems by disallowing our fire fighters to participate in squadron activities such as sports, picnics, etc. I've even been at locations where fire fighters were excused from commander's call!

What can we do to improve this picture?

- Insist on fire department participation in anything the rest of CE is doing for MWR or fun.

- Between the chief and deputy, one should be at CE at least 75 percent of the time. This is where all the money is and where people are that can fix anything that's broke. There are assistant chiefs to run the day-to-day things and the chief and deputy have radios/phones to stay in touch. The absence of the chief and deputy would allow assistant chiefs to shine and challenge them to rise to the occasion (they may even appreciate the freedom). I've always felt that there should

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be a fire management office right in the middle of the CE building.

- Make sure the fire chief is at the table when the other flight chiefs are there.

- Insist that CE officers' presence in the fire station be felt. Regardless of the civ/mil mix, the interaction between all the CE'ers is important.

There are no officers in fire protection. Yet, those first and second lieutenants and captains will one day be fire marshals, base civil engineers, and commanders at many levels in the AF, in and outside of CE. One day that brand new second lieutenant may will be your boss, or even your MAJCOM CE or a general officer. We need to begin integrating them into the biggest part of CE - the FD. We need to make them "fire officers" at a very early stage in their career. Before they're majors, all CE officers should have spent an appreciable amount of time at the FD, not just visiting but also working there. I'd like to see junior officers assigned to the FD for 90 days within the first year of their assignment. They need to know what we do and we need to understand their role in the CE world, which is pretty important. We need to start molding these fine young officers to be friends of fire protection; to take our side rather than being our foe. The other thing we need to remember is that these officers are pretty smart people. They are college graduates and are pure managers by design. So, benefit from their presence. Don't stick them in a hole somewhere with nothing to do. Remember, the goal is to make them friends and they must feel that they contribute something to the organization.

How many CE officers in your organization do you know? Can you name the CE flight chiefs?

Refresher Course: We're Airmen first, CE'ers second, and fire fighters by the grace of God.

This stuff is more important than you may think. Thanks for your time,

DONALD W. WARNER, CMSgt, USAF (RET)
Chief, Air Force Fire Protection

Update those Records!

Please ask your Fire Chiefs to provide each civilian fire fighter this information!

We have talked time and again about the need to make sure your certifications are accurately reflected in your personnel records. Despite our continued talking about it -- it still has not happened in all cases. As a result, there is a possibility you will not be considered for a position you are interested in because your personnel records do not reflect that you are qualified and certified for the position. For example, if the position requires a Fire officer III and your career brief shows you only have a Fire Officer II, the selecting official may not even consider you, although you may in fact be qualified for the job.

As a result of CIVMOD, in the near future we will stop using the DOD web site to verify certification levels. The levels in your personnel records and reflected on your career brief is what will be used. If your personnel records are incorrect and do not reflect the required levels for the position - you will not be referred -- it is that simple -- regardless if you self nominated for the position. Therefore, it would be in your best interest to ensure your personnel records accurately reflect your certification levels. If you have question give me a call at DSN 523 -6214 or 850-283-6214 or e-mail at hugh.pike@tyndall.af.mil

Hugh Pike
Program Manager
HQ AFCEA/CEXF

New Assistant Director...

It is with pleasure I announce the appointment of Mr. Thomas K. "Kevin" King as the Lead Assistant Director, Navy Fire & Emergency Services. Mr. King comes to the Navy F&ES Program from Marine Corps Headquarters where he has served as Fire Programs Manager since 1991. I have had the pleasure of working closely with Kevin on the DoD F&ESWG as well as numerous other projects. He brings a wealth of experience to our team and we look forward to his contributions and leadership when he assumes his new position in October, 2002. I am confident each of you will enjoy working with Kevin.

"Protecting Those Who Defend America!"

William D. Killen

Director, Navy Fire & Emergency Services

Naval Facilities Engineering Command

Washington Navy Yard

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Air Force nearly sweeps DOD firefighter awards

by Tech. Sgt. Michael A. Ward
Air Force Civil Engineer Support Agency

08/30/02 - TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla.

(AFPN) -- Air Force firefighters almost made it a clean sweep, receiving all but one Department of Defense annual firefighting award and sharing top honors for the other.

The Air Force firefighters received awards for military firefighter, civilian fire officer, military fire officer and fire department of the year. The heroism award was shared between an Air Force firefighter who responded to the World Trade Center attack and three Army firefighters who responded after the attack on the Pentagon.

DOD's Military Firefighter of the Year is Senior Airman **Emilio Aguilar**, from the 18th Civil Engineer Squadron at Kadena Air Base, Japan; the Civilian Fire Officer of the Year is **Randy Tsurusato**, 99th CES, Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.; and the Military Fire Officer of the Year is Senior Master Sgt. **Kenneth Helgersen**, 3rd CES, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska.

The 56th CES fire department at **Luke AFB, AZ** was named DOD Fire Department of the Year.

John Wright III, a Navy firefighter at Naval Air Station Jacksonville Fla., was named DOD Civilian Firefighter of the Year.

Staff Sgt. Tyree Bacon, from the 514th CES at McGuire AFB, N.J., received DOD's heroism award. He was a co-winner along with three Army firefighters -- Mark Skipper, Alan Wallace and Dennis Young -- assigned to the Pentagon's fire department. Bacon, a reservist and New York Supreme Court officer in Manhattan, received the heroism award for actions taken just minutes after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on Sept. 11. He and several co-workers rushed to the site to help rescue injured victims and administer emergency first aid. He barely escaped when Tower Two collapsed as he exited one of the center's buildings. He and a badly injured victim he was assisting were blown several feet by the collapsing building's shockwave. Three of his co-workers died in the collapse. The person he rescued died six days later from injuries sustained in the attack.

The awards were presented Aug. 28 at the DOD Fire and Emergency Services Training Conference in Kansas City, Mo.

Editor's note: See pictures on page 3...additional photos are located at:

<http://www.dodfire.com/graphics/Graphics.htm>

100-percent tuition assistance now available

10/01/02 - WASHINGTON (AFPN) -- Beginning Oct. 1, Air Force military members can take advantage of a new Department of Defense tuition assistance policy that pays 100 percent of the cost of tuition for off-duty courses, according to Air Force education officials.

"The policy pays tuition costs and mandatory fees for up to a maximum of \$250 per semester hour, or \$750 per three-hour course," said Jim Sweizer, chief of the Air Force voluntary education branch at the Pentagon. The policy also includes a \$4,500-per-year tuition assistance ceiling.

"In the past, we only paid instructional fees, such as a lab fee for science courses," Sweizer said. "Under the new policy, as long as the total cost falls under the authorized total, the student doesn't have to pay any money out of (his or her) pocket."

Tuition assistance still cannot be used to pay for textbooks unless they are included in an academic institution's published tuition rates, he said.

Sweizer is concerned that with 100-percent tuition assistance available to airmen, some people may opt to waive contributing to the Montgomery GI Bill. He encourages airmen to take advantage of the GI Bill's benefits.

"Not everyone will be able to complete his or her education while on active duty," he said. "Having the MGIB as an alternative for later use is a wise investment."

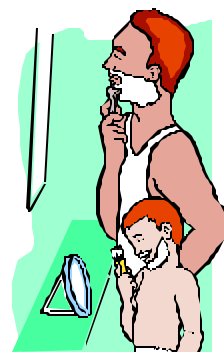
Local education centers have more information regarding the new tuition assistance policy.

RELATED LINKS: <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>

Note: see similar story on Page 5.

Shaving Waivers

We are working with the medical community to clarify the implementation of NFPA and OSHA standards related to shaving waivers and wear of the SCBA. This guidance should be out in the near future. If you have actions in progress related to this you may want to wait the release of this prior to final actions.



CMSgt Joe Rivera, Fire Protection Manager
DSN 523-6153, Commercial (850) 283-6153

DoD Fire Conference Photos



The Chief's Group (above) met in KC; MSgt Seward (above, right) receiving an award for his work in CENTAF from BG Burns; SMSgt Helgerson (below)...receiving the DoD Military Fire Officer of the Year Award!



Mr. Park (right), Director, Army Fire and Emergency Services, served as the host for the Conference.



Luke AFB was the recipient of both the Sanborn (l) and the DoD Fire Department (r) of the Year Awards! Congratulations to Chief Sanders and the Luke Fire Department!



Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) Transferability Test Program

Editor's Note: This information was provided by CMSgt Carl Glover, HQ AFCEA. Please read the preface first!

It is okay to share this information with your firefighters, with the understanding that they should not contact the Education Center or Career Advisors until the details, rules, and guidelines are fully developed and published. If we have an individual (approaching 6 - 12 years of service) who is considering a career decision on reenlisting, it may be wise to wait a couple of months, if they have enough flexibility, to see if the MGIB test program would be beneficial for them.

Although all of the guidelines are still not fully developed, we do know this at this point: If an individual transfers benefits and the benefits are used while the member is still on active duty, the MGIB only covers the tuition. However, if the benefits were transferred and used after the member has retired, then the MGIB could pay at the full rate (up to \$900 per month).

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TO TEST MGIB TRANSFERABILITY

Name: USAF MGIB Transferability Test Program

Duration: The USAF will test for one year from 1 Oct 02 through 30 Sept 03

Scope: We have identified three critical enlisted and officer Air Force Specialties as our test population. These are:

Enlisted

1N3XX- Linguists

3E7X1 - Fire Fighters

3C0X2 - Communications-Computer System Programmers

Officer

62E - Developmental Engineer

61S - Scientist

32E - Civil Engineer

Rules of Engagement:

1. The member must have completed at least six years of service but not more than 12 years to be eligible to transfer their benefits.
2. Eligible enlisted members must re-enlist for a minimum period of 4 years; officers must accept a four-year active duty service commitment.
3. The member can transfer (in writing) up to 18 months of benefits to their spouse and/or children.
4. The spouse may start using the benefits at the member's 6-year point and children at the 10-year point

provided the children have a high school diploma (or equivalency) and are at least 18 years old.

5. The member may revoke or change his transferability decision at any time, in writing.

6. Transferability will continue even if the member dies. Any overpayment or non-fulfillment will be collected.

Operations:

1. Officers: Base Education and Training Flights will contact eligible members, advise them of their options, provide counseling on transferability, process election forms, and enter applicable eligibility data in personnel database.

2. Enlisted: Base-level Career Assistance Advisors (CAA) will play a primary role in discussing benefits and options to all enlisted members who are reaching a re-enlistment decision point. The CAA will refer all eligible members who are interested in transferring their benefits to the education flight for additional counseling and completion of election form and entry of data in personnel database.

Marketing: AF/DPFM will work with SAF/PA to develop a marketing campaign to ensure information regarding the test program is widely disseminated. AF/DPFM will also request assistance from the impacted functional communities and the CAA to help spread the word. In addition, a product will be provided to each base CAA and education office that identifies all eligible enlisted and officer personnel respectively. They will be directed to contact each member describing the program and their options during the test period

Measurement: Retention data during the test period will be compared to similar data from the prior two fiscal years and analyzed to determine if there has been significant improvement in retention rates in the impacted career fields. The eight other critical AFSCs identified in both the enlisted and officer groups will serve as a control group. The retention rate increases/decreases of the three enlisted and officer test AFSCs will be compared to similar retention data in these control AFSCs. A survey will be distributed at the end of the test to all members who re-enlisted during the test to determine what impact the MGIB transferability program had on their decision.

Fire News...A good reason to buy renter's insurance

10/01/02 - ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, GA

(AFPN) -- An off-duty firefighter driving on base here waved casually as a Robins fire truck passed by. Within minutes, he learned that the truck was headed for his house. Airman 1st Class Michael P. Lecik would soon learn that he and his wife, Tiffany, had lost all but their kitchen table in a fire that happened before he got around to purchasing renter's insurance. The loss totaled \$31,700, including most of the couple's furniture, a new camcorder, a laptop, the couple's wedding album and other family photos. Two kittens born just eight weeks before were at home and perished in the fire. Assistant Fire Chief Tom Kennedy said the probable cause of the fire was an extension cord connected to computer components.



On the day of the fire, Lecik was in his car when his fire department pager went off. The number belonged to Deputy Fire Chief Senior Master Sgt. Forest Johnson. Lecik used his cell phone to answer the page. "You need to come by your house," Johnson said. "We had a fire." Lecik headed home and since he did not see smoke, figured it was a grass or dumpster fire. "Then I turned the corner and saw the five-inch hose attached to the fire hydrant," Lecik said. He watched, a sinking feeling washing over him, as a soot-covered fireman came out the front door. "I knew that it had to be a pretty serious fire." Thoughts of his wife, their unborn child and the kittens rushed into his mind. Two weeks before, the couple learned their first child was on the way. A fellow fireman met Lecik at the door and warned him not to go in without a mask. Chemicals in the laundry room had ignited, filling the home with fumes. He donned a mask and went in, shocked at the smoke and water damage that greeted him. Lecik knew it was time to tell his wife. A friend drove Lecik to his wife's place of business. He did not want to break the news on the phone. Instead, he took her to lunch and explained what had happened. "She went to pieces," he said. "The first thing she asked was 'where are my cats?'" The next few days were filled with change. The couple checked into the base's temporary lodging facility. After a week, she went back to Richmond, Va., where they had lived before her husband enlisted. She plans to stay there until the couple is re-established in the next few months. Lecik is living in the base dorm. "We probably will get another house, either on or off base," Lecik said. "Then we will kind of rebuild, piece by piece." Lecik said he regrets not buying renter's insurance sooner. "My advice to others is simple: Don't put off getting renter's insurance -- no matter what," Lecik said. "As a fire prevention officer and investigator at Robins AFB, I have seen a considerable (number) of fires, and it still amazes me that service members haven't purchased renter's insurance," Kennedy said. "When asked if they have insurance, they usually respond by saying that they didn't think anything would happen to them living in government quarters. Let me assure you, whether you live on or off the base, renter's insurance is equally important and should be a top priority when moving into an apartment, condo or home." The average cost of renter's insurance is about \$20 a month, Kennedy said. He said most insurance companies offer renter's insurance policies. The question should not be whether to buy the insurance, but how much insurance is needed to cover possessions. Kennedy recommends that prospective buyers list their personal property and estimated values, videotape or photograph all valuables, make copies of receipts, write down serial numbers and keep owners' manuals of major appliances or electronic equipment in a safe place. He advises people to work with an agent to determine proper levels of coverage and shop around for the best policy and coverage before making a commitment. Costs vary depending on the premium, location, deductible and whether people need additional coverage or a rider to an existing policy, Kennedy said. For those who do not need additional coverage for expensive jewelry or computers, Insurance Information Institute estimates costs to between \$150 and \$300 per year, he said.

Fire Fighters In the News...



Tech. Sgt. Keith Winchell, a firefighter from the 380th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, ties the flag to a fire truck in preparation for a ceremony at a forward-deployed location supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. He is a guardsman deployed from Stewart Air National Guard Base, N.Y. Winchell's full-time job is protecting the Bronx as a New York City patrolman assigned to the 50th Precinct.



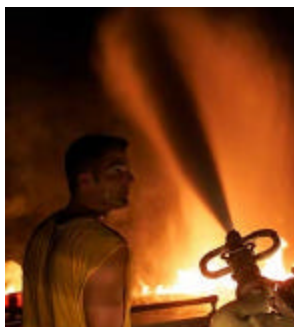
Congratulation to Sherman Greshman, Assistant Chief for Technical Services, Lackland AFB from all the Lackland Firefighters. On 12-16-01, Sherman was awarded a Bachelor of Science, Cum Laude, Management/Human Resources, from Park University. Way to go Sherm!!



AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy (AFIE) -- Fire crews from the 31st Civil Engineer Squadron here respond to a vehicle fire Aug. 23. The vehicle caught fire after the owner had experienced mechanical problems and was

headed to the auto skills center. Just 200 yards short, the fire started and he was forced to abandon his vehicle and call for emergency assistance. Within minutes of the call, the fire fighters responded and extinguished the fire. Aviano fire fighters respond to an average of 800 calls annually.

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (AFPN) -- Airman 1st Class Christopher Prince, assigned to the 379th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron fire protection flight, cools superheated columns of air and smoke created by a planned bonfire at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. Fire protection officials built the bonfire to eliminate a large amount of scrap wood, which had become a health and safety risk. Air Force firefighters used the training opportunity to see how their vehicles and the base's water system would perform during a large fire. Prince is deployed to Al Udeid from Eglin Air Force Base, FL.



Top-notch MSgt needed!

Rank: MSgt Job #: 253595 AFSC: 3E771
VOL BY: 23 Oct 2002 RNLTD: 28 Feb 2003
Tour: CONUS Unit: 0000 AIR FORCE
SPACE Base: PETERSON AFB CO Req
Number:

JOB DESC: Job Description- Directs Headquarters Air Force Space Command (AFSPC) Civil Engineer (CE) Fire and Emergency Services Program to include organizing, training, and equipping Fire Protection units for worldwide contingencies and Command missions. Oversees MAJCOM policy development and manages deployments and notional taskings in support of AF/DoD missions. Responsible for identifying formal training requirements and coordinating advanced training courses for Command Fire Protection personnel. Determines Fire Protection budget requirements for equipment, supplies, and special purpose items. Develops supporting budget submissions/requests. Works closely with Air Staff functional experts to manage the Command Fire Protection vehicle program and establishes replacement priorities. Advises the HQ AFSPC Civil Engineer on life safety and facility design requirements. Works closely with internal headquarters staff to ensure fire protection and life safety requirements are included in construction projects. Conducts staff assistance visits to Command installations worldwide.

Qualifications: MSgt or MSgt select, AFSC. Associates Degree in Fire Science. Certified as Fire Officer III, Fire Instructor II and Fire Inspector II. Overall rating of 5 on last 5 EPRs. Early reporting desired/authorized. How To Apply: 392 Update Mail Application To: Special Duty Code: POC1: LACONTE JAMES, OTHER
Phone: 692-5112 Email: james.laconte@peterson.af.mil POC2: GLASSIC JODI M, SSgt Phone: 692-5625 Email: jodi.glassic@peterson.af.mil

POC INFO:

James D. LaConte
Command Fire Chief
HQ AFSPC/CEPX
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Comm: (719) 554-5112
FAX: 692-2562

9-11-01 Remembrance...



SSgt Hays and SrA Cerrulli (above)

These are two photos from a Memorial Ceremony held at Spangdahlem Air Base to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice on 9-11-01.



Firefighters from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., Ventura, and Santa Barbara County stand watch as a brush fire roars up a hillside on base June 15, 2002. More than 900 firefighters battled the blaze.



Snippets...

On June 13th 2002 General Mitchell Air Force Reserve Base, Milwaukee, WI dedicated the Fire Station to the memory of Roger G. Edwards. Chief Edwards served as the standing Fire Chief from

August, 1993 until his death 26 November 1997. Roger also retired from active duty Air Force Fire Protection which he served 23 years. He spent 8 years in England, 4 years in Germany, a short tour in Turkey, and 9 years at KI Sawyer AFB, Michigan. After his retirement from active duty he served as the Asst Chief of Technical Services at KI Sawyer AFB until his selection for Fire Chief of the 440th. The Ceremony was held at the 440th AFRES Fire Station Bldg 212. Mr. Jeffery Davis AFRC Command Fire Chief, Roger's wife Margaret, daughters Kelly and Kim, his parents, brothers and sisters along with their spouses, several nieces and nephews, many personnel friends, retired Firefighters from the 440th department, and the 440th base populace attended the ceremony. Retired Chief Bill Stevens was the key note speaker sharing his many memories and Rogers dedication to the Fire Service with the attendees. A luncheon provided by the 440th Fire Department followed the ceremony.

Paul H. Formolo
Chief, Fire Protection Flight
440 SPTG/CEF
General Mitchell ARS, Milwaukee, WI



Commission on Chief Fire Officer Designation

Chief Richard Marinucci, Chairman of the Commission on Chief Fire Officer Designation, announced a new format and process to obtain Chief Fire Officer Designation during the Eastern Division conference in Wilmington, DE recently. The new process is a shorter application that recognizes the experiences and skills a fire chief over the years of serving as chief of a department. This new process streamlines the application process for obtaining Chief Fire Officer Designation. This process is now available, and interested chiefs can call 703 6791-4620 or go to the web site www.cfainet.org for more information. This is an outstanding opportunity for fire chiefs to obtain their CFO designation, don't miss it. (Editor's note: Congratulations to **CMSgt Terry Ford**, who is the first in the Air Force to complete this process!)

Stuff



This group of distinguished folks attended a “Standard of Response Coverage” Seminar at the Air Force Academy earlier this year!

Certification Packages

We need your help. We're experiencing an increase in phone calls from various bases requesting us to accept certification packages via fax or to push a package to the head of the line. The main reasons for the calls are either because they have a slot for an advanced course and need to meet the prerequisites or they risk being sent back (4 in the last two days), or we are asked to place a package higher in the queue for a civil service employee so they can get on an appointment or promotion list. This places us in an awkward position for several reasons. First, the prerequisites are posted on the web along with the statement that those who don't meet them will be sent back. I know you can appreciate what kind of predicament this places us in when we don't follow our own published rules and how the number of requests begin to proliferate once word filters back that this is an acceptable practice. Second, civil service employees would have grounds to file congressional, ULPs, or grievances if someone is given an advantage over someone else by having their package pushed ahead. The most equitable way for us to handle this is to process packages on a first come first served basis. We're asking that you discourage this practice and inform your bases what the standards are and of our intent to enforce them. Generally, if a unit expects to send someone to an advanced course, the candidate should already meet the prerequisites. I'm sure you would agree that a person who has worked hard and meets the prerequisites deserves to go to the course and should be the one scheduled to attend, the same holds true for promotion consideration. If the person doesn't meet the prerequisites they should allow for at least 60 days prior to the course start date to have any packages in to us for those looking to go to school. We've recently added a new package tracking system that individuals and fire departments can log on to, submit

their packages and then track them every step of the way through the process very much like similar systems used by UPS and FedEx. Generally speaking, if a persons package is submitted at least 60 days prior to the class start date or promotion consideration date, it should be through the system 30 days before the course begins allowing for sufficient time and eliminating the possibility of being sent back. The staff here has worked tremendously hard to streamline the certification process. We've been processing on average, 3,000 certificates a month, roughly 100 a day. We have been able to keep packages within our 30 day turn around window even through lean staffing periods. Thank you for your help in getting the word out and for all you're doing for Air Force Fire Protection.

LAURENT R. McDONALD, SMSgt, USAF

Good Day Fire Chiefs,

It has been brought to our attention that there may be some fire departments have been using a CPO letter to justify hiring temporary fire fighters and waiving the certification requirements. As the Executive Agent for the DoD Fire Fighter Certification Program we are not waiving fire fighter certifications under this program for health, safety, and liability reasons. As first responders to potential WMD/CBRNE incidents, it is imperative our people are fully trained for their own protection, as well as that of the jurisdictions they protect. Please ensure widest dissemination to your subordinate units that our normal certification requirements remain in place and are not going to be waived under this program. Thank you for your support.

LAURENT R. McDONALD, SMSgt, USAF
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Certification Program Manager
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More Stuff...



Father, son
briefly
reunited on
air base in
Kyrgyzstan

It was an early
Father's Day for
Senior Master Sgt.

Charles Butler. It came on behalf of the United States Air Force. A 23-year Air Force veteran, Senior Master Sgt. Butler, was deployed in January from his base in North Carolina to Ganci Air Base in Kyrgyzstan. His son, Airman Charles Butler, 9th Airlift Squadron loadmaster, had been running supply missions from the United States to many bases in the area since shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks. Because of their military duties, the two hadn't seen each other since a family reunion in July 2001. Had there been no war, the elder Butler said, the two had planned to reunite during Thanksgiving 2001. Senior Master Sgt. Butler, 376th AEW Fire Chief, had hoped that a cargo mission would bring Airman Butler to Ganci Air Base -- the military installation named after the New York City Fire Chief killed in the Sept. 11 attacks. Father told son to contact him if the chance ever happened. It did on May 24 when Airman Butler flew a cargo mission to his father's base. Hundreds of airplanes flew in and out of the base, the chance his son was on one was rare, Senior Master Sgt. Butler said, but he had "hoped all along he'd come in there." Usually, Airman Butler was only on the ground for a few hours -- long enough to unload, refuel and fulfill other Air Force duties. But, on the morning Airman Butler was at the base, the elder Butler was in a classified meeting with all of his communication tools turned off. As soon as he left the classified tent, a dispatcher rang him that his son was there. Father and son were reunited for about 40 minutes. "One of the things deployed people miss so much is home," Senior Master Sgt. Butler said. It was a "little shot of home" for him. "We had never been together both on duty and in uniform," Senior Master Sgt. Butler said. Born in Marion, OH, Airman Butler lived all over the world during his father's career. He decided to join the military after graduating from high school in Dayton and attending college for a short time. At first he wasn't so sure he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps, Airman Butler said. "Now that I'm in the Air Force, I have a fuller sense of pride for what he does," he said. Airman Butler joined the military two years ago. He's stationed at Dover AFB, DE, flying missions 21 days out of the month, his father said. Senior Master Sgt. Butler served almost five months in Kyrgyzstan. He returned to home on June 1, 2002 -- just nine days shy of a five month tour -- to visit his parents Mary and James Berry. His wife, Carmen, and daughter Angela, 3, stayed with his parents during his deployment. "I was so happy when I heard that," Mary Berry said about her son and grandson's meeting. "I was just thrilled when I found out." (note: see story about Ganci AB, next page)

Mr. David LaPlante a Moody Firefighter was recently selected to receive a Commander-in-Chief's Installation Excellence Award Many of you may remember Dave, he was the USAF Fire Protection Heroism Award Winner for 1999. Congratulations to Mr. LaPlante who continues to excel !

Airmen receive Sijan awards



04/10/02 - (From left) Lt. Col. Carlos R. Cruz-Gonzalez, Capt. Shawn W. Campbell, Master Sgt. Timothy A. Gerald and **Staff Sgt. Kile W. Stewart (a fire fighter stationed at Kadena AB)** received 2001 Lance P. Sijan Air Force Leadership Awards during a Pentagon ceremony April 9. Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche presented the awards. Named for Capt. Lance P. Sijan, the first Air Force Academy Graduate (Class of 1965) to receive the Medal of Honor, the Sijan Award annually recognizes senior and junior officer and enlisted airmen who demonstrate outstanding leadership abilities and are assigned to organizations at the wing level or below.

NFPA Compliant BDU Sizes

In reviewing the NSN numbers/description of the shirt/blouse I believe that the sizing codes have been reversed and the sleeve length has been listed first and then the chest size. In most instances the normal method of size description is chest first and then sleeve length. I have asked CMSgt Glover to inform the USAF that this has occurred so that we do not get the wrong sizes ordered. He will also inform you as soon as it has been corrected. John Granby, Vice President Govt Markets, Lion Uniforms; 800-548-6614 ext 2843.

Even More Stuff...



Laughlin NCO Takes Second Job as Hero

A Laughlin firefighter, while volunteering for the Val Verde County Fire Department, recently was involved in a couple of situations where his training helped save the lives of people. **Master Sgt. Michael Sweet**, NCO in charge of health and safety for the 47th Civil Engineer Squadron Fire Protection Flight, has been a volunteer for the county fire department for two and a

half years. The first of the incidents happened on May 16. Sergeant Sweet, who was named Val Verde County Fire Department Volunteer of 2001, was at the Val Verde fire station when the station received a call at around 4:30 a.m. concerning an accident six miles west of Comstock, Texas. The accident involved two 18-wheelers that collided on Highway 90. Sergeant Sweet was part of the team that used hydraulic rescue equipment to cut one of the trucks open to get the driver out. Once the driver was removed, he helped in stabilize and treat him. He also helped transfer the victim to a helicopter when it arrived. Both drivers were airlifted to San Antonio. The second incident involved an 8-month-old infant who was choking on a sunflower seed. Sergeant Sweet was at the firehouse May 24 when he heard the call over the radio from Val Verde reserve deputy sheriff Art Garcia. Mr. Garcia's infant daughter, Samantha, was choking. Upon arrival, he gave the baby four back blows and four chest thrusts, a technique used on choking infants. This dislodged the sunflower seed from the baby's throat, allowing her to breathe again. "It wasn't just me out there," he said. "There were many dedicated professionals doing their jobs. I could not have done what I did without them." It is this attitude that makes Sergeant Sweet such a valuable member of any fire department, said **Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Raymond**, 47th Civil Engineer Squadron deputy fire chief. "He is a servant," he said. "His whole life (for) the past 27 years has been devoted to the fire service and the community no matter if it is Texas, Alaska or deployed. He emulates the core values in his conduct and his service."

Air base in Kyrgyzstan named after hero

He was a legend, a hero, and a role model, someone everyone looked up to. He gave his life Sept. 11 protecting his men during the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. He was Chief Peter J. Ganci Jr., Chief of the New

York City Fire Department, and his name will forever be etched in time as USAF officials chose to name the air base after him. When asked why the base was named after Ganci, Brig. Gen. Chris Kelly, 376th Air Expeditionary Wing Commander, said it was just the right thing to do. "We started to do the research of trying to find the family, and without even mentioning the chief's name, we miraculously found his brother. The chief's brother, Army Reserve Col. Daniel Ganci, said his brother deserves an honor like this and he is very proud of the USAF for thinking of him. "I know he wouldn't believe it," Daniel said. "He was just a regular guy and never thought of himself as someone important even though he was very important. He saved lives and fought fires and he did it better than anyone, and he had the decorations to prove it. Fighting fire was as important to him as flying is to the Air Force." And Peter believed that if you are going to do it, you do it with the best, you train with the best and you strive to be the best, Daniel said. "When it comes right down to it, Peter J. Ganci is a legend to fire fighters around the country, not because he's the chief of the FDNY or because he gave his life on 9-11," said Nick Kelly, a D.C. firefighter and son of Brig. Gen. Chris Kelly. "Chief Ganci is a legend because he was really, really good at what he did, being a fireman. He was not a chief, boss, or administrator first. Chief Ganci was a smoke eating guy, just like the rest of us. Like Omar Bradley was a soldier's soldier, Chief Ganci was a fireman's fireman." For more than 33 years, Peter found himself at the top of his profession just because he wanted to be the best fireman he could be, Daniel said. "The part I was always proudest of, whenever anyone asked what he did, he would tell you he was a NYC fireman," he said. Some people think he had his head screwed on backward because he ran into burning buildings for a living, Nick said. But would he say it is his job and it was the job of those 343 firefighters who lost their lives on Sept. 11. "I have been asked many times since then, 'Would you have gone into the towers?' I never hesitate, my answer, 'Hell yes,' he said. That can-do attitude is what makes Ganci a legend and hero, "He never hesitated," Kelly said. "I'm sure he was scared out of his mind. We all were that day. But, Chief Ganci and his men strapped on their gear, like a 1000 times before, and went to do their job. Much like you and the rest of the people in the armed services do every day. You show up, and do the best you can."